United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1224
11 September 1992

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General calls for major enlargement of United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia, so that it can safeguard delivery of relief supplies.

+ Secretary-General decides to send goodwill mission to Georgia to follow up on recent agreement and to explore possibility of establishing United Nations presence in that region.

+ Secretary-General to send fact-finding mission to Tashkhent, Uzbekistan, this weekend.

+ Secretary-General tells United Nations staff that he has made it clear to Member States that, unless security is ensured, staff will not be able to fulfill their duties and the missions entrusted to the United Nations may be jeopardized.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, leads United Nations delegation to Somalia, to review efforts to ease famine emergency in which 200 people are said to be still dying every day.

+ Secretary-General welcomes transmission of draft chemical weapons convention to General Assembly.

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Proposals to enlarge the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia, to enable it to help safeguard the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo and other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were made today in a report to the Security Council by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The Secretary-General recommends the addition to UNPROFOR of four or five infantry battalion groups; a transport battalion of some 500 all ranks with 100 trucks and an adequate maintenance capacity, and extra medical, engineering and communications support together with 80 more United Nations military observers and about 80 civilian staff members.

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The task of UNPROFOR under its enlarged mandate would be to support the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver humanitarian relief supplies throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to provide protection for the convoys when UNHCR - after consulting UNPROFOR - considered such protection necessary.

The transport battalion to be added to UNPROFOR would be available for the delivery of relief supplies along routes determined to be particularly difficult. In other cases, UNHCR trucks with civilian drivers would constitute the convoy, but would be escorted by UNPROFOR military vehicles and personnel. The Secretary-General said it should remain UNHCR's responsibility to determine relief priorities and delivery routes and schedules, and to coordinate requests from other agencies wishing to join UNPROFOR-protected convoys.

Noting that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had expressed concern about the safety of civilians released from detention camps while being taken to places of refuge in neighbouring countries, the Secretary-General said the expanded mandate and enlarged strength of UNPROFOR would enable the force to provide some protection for convoys of released detainees. This would be subject to arrangements between the ICRC and the force commander.

In providing protective support services, the report said, the UNPROFOR troops concerned would follow normal peace-keeping rules of engagement. They would be authorised to use force in self-defence, and this could be deemed to include "situations in which armed persons attempt by force to prevent United Nations troops from carrying out their mandate". The Secretary-General said these considerations were particularly relevant in the current tense situation in the proposed area of operations.

On the financial implications of his new proposals, should they be approved by the Security Council, the Secretary-General said his recommendations were based on the assumption that such additional resources would be provided at no cost to the United Nations, and that the contributing countries, or other United Nations member states on a voluntary basis, would cover the additional administrative expenses incurred by the Organisation. He said he had made this clear in consultations with member states who had expressed an interest in contributing military personnel, equipment and logistic support to UNPROFOR. It would be necessary to confirm that sufficient funds were available before the additional troops could be put in place.
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A United Nations official announced today that the Secretary-General would send a goodwill mission to Georgia as follow-up to the 3 September agreement between the Governments of the Russian Federation and Georgia, as well as representatives of Abkhazia. The Mission will also explore the possibility of establishing a United Nations presence in Georgia. The

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mission, which will depart this weekend, will be led by Mr. Gustave Feissel, Director in the Department of Political Affairs.

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In a second announcement today, the official said the Secretary-General would be sending a fact-finding mission to Tashkhent in connection with the recent developments in Central Asia and at the request of the Government of Uzbekistan.

The mission, which will leave this weekend, will be headed by Raymond Sommereyns, Director of the Department for Political Affairs.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told United Nations staff today, in a statement delivered on the occation of Staff Day, that he had made it clear to Member States that, unless security was ensured, staff would not be able to fulfill their duties and the missions entrusted to the United Nations might be jeopardized. He added that he was making every possible effort to obtain the release of colleagues who were either detained or imprisoned in violation of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities.

On the issue of the restructuring of the Organization, the Secretary-General said he was fully aware that the process of change was an unsettling one. He noted that this was a unique opportunity to build a stronger, more independent Secretariat where the best traditions of public service were combined with modern management practices.

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Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, who is on a two-week visit to five African countries, arrived in Somalia yesterday to review the ongoing efforts to ease the famine emergency in that country. He is accompanied by James Grant, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and senior representatives of the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

At the start of their three-day visit to Somalia, the delegation visited the hospital and feeding centres in the famine-stricken town of Bardhere. The United Nations representatives were told that food aid deliveries to the town were proceeding smoothly. They then travelled to a nearby area where thousands of destitute and starving people continue to gather in search of assistance and where,despite expanded food aid, at least 200 people, mostly children, are still dying daily.

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The delegation held a meeting with representatives of United Nations and non-governmental agencies at the port of Mogadishu, which reopened today after being closed since 28 August following an attack, and the looting of fuel, relief food and trucks.

Earlier this week Mr Eliasson and his team visited Kenya. On Sunday they begin their mission, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to Ethiopia and Sudan.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today welcomed the announcement that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has concluded its 1992 session with an agreement on the draft convention banning chemical weapons and the transmission of the completed text to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly.

According to a statement issued by the Secretary-General's Spokesman, the draft convention is the result of many years of multilateral negotiation and offers the international community the long awaited opportunity to eliminate completely a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. The Secretary-General has expressed the hope that all states will give the draft convention their most serious consideration with a view to achieving the widest possible acceptance when it is formally opened for signature.

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